

October 28, 2019

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112
dan@equaljusticeamerica.org

Dear Mr. Ruben,

During my first two weeks, I have had the opportunity to attend a wide array of trainings on a variety of immigration petitions that Legal Aid Chicago tackles - from VAWA petitions to U Visas and all the supplemental forms in between. In the Immigration and Worker's Rights Practice Group (IWR), I worked with clients to collect personal documents essential for each petition and drafting each application with care to ensure quality work. It is eye-opening to see the difficulty immigrants face when seeking status in the United States and the lack of funds they have to afford legal representation. I am grateful for the financial support from EJA that makes it possible for me to do this important work.

I absolutely enjoyed my work at Legal Aid Chicago. Through my work in IWR I am learning so much about the challenges that being low income presents to so many immigrants in the United States. The complexity of the immigration legal system makes it difficult for the average person to navigate through. Moreover, legal representation is simply unaffordable for so many immigrants and it is disheartening to imagine all those who do not have the opportunity to receive a favorable outcome for their situation simply because important deadlines have passed or they do not supplement their application with enough supporting documentation. There is so much reform needed in the immigration system and access to Justice is high on my list.

This summer was the start of multistep transition for Legal Aid Chicago. During their annual fundraiser luncheon, they announced their name change – LAF became Legal Aid Chicago! During this event, Legal Aid Chicago raised over a \$1 million to help continue their free/low-cost services for those who would not be able to afford legal services. Finally, Legal Aid Chicago announced that they would be forming a subsidiary to help with legal issues conflict with their Government funding.

Unfortunately, I have a limited memory of my last few weeks at Legal Aid Chicago. I was hospitalized due to chronic illness and the remainder of my summer was a blur. I also decided to take a yearlong medical leave to insure my health. However, Legal Aid Chicago was wonderful and understanding of situation.

I am so grateful for this opportunity and for EJA's help in making it possible for me. When I started law school, I doubted my decision to enter the legal field. However, spending my first summer as a law student at Legal Aid Chicago was inspiring – from the stories of my clients to the small peek into my future as an attorney. I aspire to continue to work with the immigrant

community and use my skills and knowledge to help people navigate through the complicated legal system and represent low income immigrants from family separation and the uprooting of their lives. Additionally, I hope that I can continue to work in such a great environment of dedicated professionals, such as the attorneys Legal Aid Chicago. I am proud I was able to work with an organization that helps low-income immigrants continue the lives they built for themselves and their families here in the United States.

Sincerely,
Monica Saavedra